

AMENDMENT AND PRESENTATION OF CLAIMS

Please replace all prior claims in the present application with the following claims, in which no claims are canceled, withdrawn from consideration, currently amended, or newly presented. Claims 20-23 were previously withdrawn.

1. (Previously Presented) A method for establishing communications between a calling party using a telephone connection and a called party using an instant messaging client, comprising:

receiving a telephone call connection request from the calling party, wherein the calling party specifies a telephone number of the called party;

retrieving an instant messaging identifier corresponding to the telephone number; and

establishing end-to-end voice communications between the telephone connection and the instant messaging client.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging client processes voice signals between the calling party and the called party.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the called party participates by voice communication via the instant messaging client.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging client receives voice signals from the called party and sends the voice signals to the calling party via the telephone connection.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging client receives voice signals from the calling party and provides the voice signals to the called party.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call connection request is directed to the instant messaging client.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the instant messaging client is to receive voice communications based on a profile associated with the instant messaging client.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the instant messaging client is to receive voice communications based on a profile associated with the called party.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the instant messaging client is to receive voice communications based on receiving an indication from the called party as to the called party's ability and desire to receive voice communications via the instant messaging client.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether the instant messaging client is to receive voice communications based on receiving an indication from the calling party as to the calling party's desire to establish voice communications via the instant messaging client.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the end-to-end voice communications are established via a gateway.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the gateway interfaces between a telephone network coupled to the telephone connection and a packet-switched data network coupled to the instant messaging client.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging identifier corresponds to a time period designated for contacting the called party.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging identifier is stored in a database configured to store user information that includes an alias for uniquely identifying the called party in an instant messaging environment among a plurality of instant messaging environments and destination information specifying one or more communication devices for reaching the called party.

18. (Previously Presented) A network apparatus for supporting instant messaging, comprising:

a communication interface configured to initiate establishment of an end-to-end voice session between a calling party communicating over a telephone device and a called party, reachable over a plurality of communication methods including instant messaging, based on a telephone number of the called party; and

a processor configured to retrieve an instant messaging identifier corresponding to a telephone number of the called party for establishment of the end-to-end voice session via an instant messaging application of the called party.

19. (Previously Presented) The network apparatus of claim 18, wherein the instant messaging identifier is stored in a database configured to store user information that includes an alias for uniquely identifying the called party in an instant messaging environment among a plurality of instant messaging environments and destination information specifying one or more communication devices for reaching the called party.

20. (Withdrawn) A method for establishing a voice communication session between a calling party and a called party, the method comprising:

receiving a first call leg initiated by the calling party over a telephony network, wherein the voice communication session includes a first call leg and a second call leg;

prompting the calling party with for input corresponding to call treatment of the first call leg if the second call leg cannot be established over a data network to the called party via an instant messaging application; and

performing the call treatment on the first call leg based on the input, wherein the call treatment includes establishing the voice communication session with the called party at a pre-specified communication device.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein the call treatment further includes leaving a voice message or a facsimile message to the called party.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21, wherein the voice message or the facsimile message is provided as an e-mail attachment for the called party.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, further comprising:
sending an instant message, by an automated call processor, to the called party to determine whether the called party wants to establish the voice communication session with the calling party.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
sending an instant message to the called party to determine whether the called party wants to establish the voice communication session with the calling party.